

**PRESIDENT BOLDRINI SPEECH**  
**FOURTH WORLD CONFERENCE OF SPEAKERS OF PARLIAMENT**  
***(New York, 31 August – 2 September 2015)***

***AS DELIVERED***

Madam Chair, colleagues, members of delegations, ladies and gentlemen, I am honoured to be here today. Our conference is taking place in a world in turmoil. Almost sixty million people - the equivalent of the population of my country, Italy - are forcibly displaced due to war, violence and human rights violations. Climate change is already affecting millions, not just in developing countries, but also in the global North, including here in the United States. Intolerance and racism are on the rise, and terrorism threatens the fabric of society in many parts of the world.

We are meeting here at UN headquarters, dear colleagues, just before the major summit which will define the global development agenda for the decades to come. The SDGs go far beyond the MDGs and represent a true global partnership.

I am glad that the final draft of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development includes references to the important role of parliaments. Concerted lobbying on the part of the IPU – which I thank - and some of us has, I believe, contributed to this.

Italy – my country - has made various contributions to the Declaration we will approve today. One is on migration, possibly *the* key challenge we face today, alongside climate change.

With millions on the move globally, we must do more to ensure that human mobility does not lead to tragedy, as unfortunately - despite all the rescue efforts - it does. We have witnessed this over the past few years in the Mediterranean sea, where thousands of people have perished in the attempt to reach Europe, or, more recently, in Austria, where dozens of refugees died of suffocation in an overcrowded truck.

We must work harder to eradicate the root causes of peoples' flight - such as wars, human rights violations, poverty and a lack of development - and support the countries which host millions of refugees – not hundreds of thousands, but millions.

In this context, as a European, let me say that the EU member states should manage this issue in a more cooperative way, sharing responsibilities and moving towards a truly common migration and asylum policy which must be based on human rights. Building walls to keep the refugees out is unacceptable – and will simply not work, as desperate people will find other ways to reach safety.

Another contribution Italy has made is on the Internet. The Internet has changed how people live and work. Issues such as enabling access to the Internet for all, protecting users' privacy and personal data, ensuring that commercial interests are not paramount, and safeguarding net neutrality are major challenges we must tackle. As parliamentary Speakers, we must also reaffirm our commitment to an Internet free from censorship and from limitations to fundamental democratic principles.

The Italian Chamber of Deputies has recently approved a Charter on Internet Rights drafted by MPs and high-level experts, which I will be happy to share with you all.

Finally, dear colleagues, I believe we should all, as parliamentary Speakers, uphold the rights of minorities. In this context, let me endorse my British colleague John Bercow's call for us to defend the rights of LGBT people, which are lamentably not mentioned in the Declaration we will approve today.

I hope, dear colleagues, to have the chance to discuss these and other issues of common interest with you soon.

Thank you for the attention.